

# IMPROVING THE CONTINUITY OF BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT THROUGH A BREASTFEEDING COALITION

Johnson County Public Health - 855 S. Dubuque St. Iowa City, IA 52240

## PLAN

Identify an opportunity and  
Plan for Improvement

### 1. Getting Started

There is a gap in the continuity of breastfeeding (BF) support between the time mothers are discharged from the hospital and reconnect with WIC or their breastfeeding peer counselor (BFPC). BF may be discontinued or supplemented with formula during this time.

### 2. Assemble the Team

The WIC/BFPC Coordinator worked with IBCLCs at Mercy – Iowa City and UIHC to improve this gap in BF support intermittingly in the past.

### 3. Examine the Current Approach

The Coordinator initially met with the Mercy IBCLC several years ago since Mercy is a smaller hospital and improvements could be more easily implemented. Discussion included promotion of the BFPC Program at Mercy BF support groups and in patient rooms. The Coordinator introduced a Hospital BF Expectation Plan. The Coordinator also met later with UIHC IBCLCs to discuss WIC/BFPC services and hospital plan. Eventually, the Coordinator sent a monthly email of BF updates to all IBCLCs.

#### Challenges encountered:

- 1) Busy schedules and staff shortages for all involved made individual ongoing meetings/communication difficult.
- 2) Hospital Expectation Plan was submitted too soon before delivery date and full implementation of process wasn't developed.
- 3) Not all staff who provide BF support were present at meetings.

### 4. Identify Potential Solutions

#### Solutions for improvement:

- 1) Continue working independently with the hospitals
- 2) Develop a way for all IBCLCs and Coordinator to come together for

discussion on a regular basis to identify problems/solutions.

### 5. Develop an Improvement Theory

The gap in the continuity of BF support will most effectively be decreased through a BF Coalition. Membership would include not only hospital IBCLCs and WIC, but all providers the community who give BF support to mothers. The Coalition will enable all providers to be knowledgeable of each other and their respective services as well as reach out as a collective effort to promote BF in Johnson County.

## DO

Test the Theory for Improvement

### 6. Test the Theory

The Coalition began meeting in July, 2019. Meetings occur the second Tuesday of odd numbered months. The purpose of the Coalition is to: a) support BF educators in Johnson County; b) educate the public about BF; and c) represent the voice of the women we're trying to serve. Membership has grown from an initial 8 members to currently 22 including IBCLCs, associate director of nursing for Women's Health Services, NICU nurses, OB/GYN nurse practitioner, OB/GYN physician, doula, WIC/BFPC coordinator, and the director and donor coordinator of the Mothers Milk Bank (recent July, 2020). The WIC/BFPC coordinator has shared information on the BFPC Program, WIC enrollment process, and WIC breastpump policy at various meetings and sent follow-up summary emails. The Coordinator surveyed Coalition members in June, 2020 to determine if they had a good understanding of the BF support provided by WIC, what additional information is needed, and what items to add to future Coalition meetings.

## STUDY

Use Data to Study Results  
of the Test

### 7. Study the Results

The survey was sent to 19 Coalition members; 9 responded (47%):

#### Good Understanding WIC BF Support

Yes – 5 (56%)

Basic Understanding – 2 (22%)

No – 2 (22%)

#### What Additional Info is Needed

Pump policy (including statewide) – 4

WIC services – 3

BFPC Program – 2

#### Other Coalition Agenda Items

\*Venues for providing resources to public

\*Need for Coalition officer positions

\*Events for World BF Week

#### *Influences on Survey Results*

\*Not all members present at meetings

\*Large amount of info to retain

\*Half of membership responded

## ACT

Standardize the Improvement and  
Establish Future Plans

### 8. Standardize the Improvement or Develop New Theory

The Coalition should continue meeting. Membership now reaches more facets of BF support and should continue to expand representation. Agenda items can be prioritized by members and WIC/BFPC items staggered. The effectiveness of decreasing the gap in the continuity of BF support with any Coalition member must be defined.

### 9. Establish Future Plans

- Identify method to measure continuity of BF support
- Archive meeting minutes and documents for easy retrieval
- Share directory of WIC pump policies in Iowa
- Create website to establish identity and credibility